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ADJUSTING DEVICE

of which the following is a complete specification:

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ADJUSTING DEVICE

CROSS-REFERENCES TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

[0001] This application claims the priority of German Patent Application Serial No. 299 20 996.2, filed November 30, 1999, the subject matter of which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates, in general, to an adjusting device, and more particularly to an adjusting device of a type including a lifting mechanism and a rotary drive having an output member coupled to a lifting arm of the lifting mechanism, with the lifting arm articulated to a component of a stationary supporting structure for movement of the component between two end positions.

[0003] An adjusting device of this type can be configured for a wide variety of applications. Unlike the rotary drive which normally remains unchanged regardless for which application it is used, the lifting mechanism is configured to suit the application at hand. The adjusting device, involved here, is in particular suitable for applications in which the stationary supporting structure is made of a frame or configured as a frame, and the component being moved is also of

frame-like design and swingably mounted to the supporting structure. The rotary drive is typically a dc gear motor operated with a safety voltage and at an output speed which is fairly small compared to the speed of the rotor of the dc motor.

[0004] The adjusting device is especially used for so-called mass products and thus should be as inexpensive as possible.

[0005] Normally, the rotary drive is secured by a mounting to the stationary parts. This mounting is positioned at an offset to the moving output member of the rotary drive so that the output force of the rotary drive applies a moment upon the mounting. The mounting should therefore be dimensioned accordingly; however the parts of the supporting structure fail to provide the required stability.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] It is thus an object of the present invention to provide an improved adjusting device, obviating the afore-stated drawbacks.

[0007] In particular, it is an object of the present invention to provide an improved adjusting device with a lifting mechanism which can be suited to the type and operation of the component being moved and is easy and inexpensive to couple to the output member of the rotary drive.

[0010] According to another embodiment of the present invention, the rotary drive may be positioned between two support elements in the form of support beams. In this case, tensile forces as well as pressure forces may be absorbed by the support beams. Depending on the type of use, the support beams may extend horizontally or also vertically, and may form a guide in particular in vertical disposition. This may be necessary, for example, when incorporating the adjusting device in a seating furniture.

[0011] According to another embodiment of the present invention, the housing of the rotary drive may be supported indirectly by the support beam. This can be implemented, for example, by attaching a fork head with aligned bores to the housing of the rotary drive or forming in the housing wall aligned bores, for passage of the support beam through the bores of the fork head or the bores of the housing wall.

[0012] A particularly simple and operatively safe connection between the output member of the rotary drive and the lifting arm of the lifting mechanism can be realized by form-fittingly connecting the output member of the rotary drive with the lifting arm of the lifting mechanism. In this way, an adjustment of the lifting arm with respect to the output member of the rotary drive is also avoided.

[0013] Suitably, the output member of the rotary drive may be formed by a rotation part with a polygonal bore for snug-fit passage of a crossbar through the

FIG. 10, showing the footrest in the other fully extended end position.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0029] Throughout all the Figures, same or corresponding elements are generally indicated by same reference numerals.

[0030] Turning now to the drawing, and in particular to FIG. 1, there is shown a schematic side view of one embodiment of an adjusting device according to the present invention, generally designated by reference numeral 10 and mounted to an exemplified slatted frame, generally designated by reference numeral 1 and including spaced-apart stationary side panels 20 (only one side panel 20 is visible in FIG. 1), a back portion 19 which is swingable mounted to the side panels 20 for rotation about a pivot axis 21, and a head portion 22 which is swingably mounted to the back portion 19 for rotation about a pivot axis 23. The adjusting device 10 includes a rotary drive mechanism, generally designated by reference numeral 11, and a lifting mechanism, generally designated by reference numeral 12. The rotary drive mechanism 11 includes a housing 13 and a dc motor (not shown), which is accommodated in the housing 13 and has an output member with a square bore in which a crossbar 14 in the form of a square tube is snugly fitted. Of course, the square configuration of the bore and complementary square configuration of the crossbar 14 are shown by way of example only, and may certainly be replaced by any other polygonal

[illegible]

[0032] The housing 13 of the rotary drive mechanism 11 is supported by a support member in the form of a beam 16 which extends parallel to the crossbar 14 and is intended to absorb pressure forces acting on the rotary drive mechanism 11 when the lifting mechanism 12 is lowered. The support beam 16 can be secured in a suitable manner with their ends to the stationary side panels 20 of the slatted frame 1. Persons skilled in the art will understand that the disposition of the support beam 16 is, however, dependent on the application at hand and may differ from the one shown in FIG. 1.

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certainly within the scope of the present invention to position the support beams 16, 17 in a vertical orientation in the event some applications require such a disposition.

[0034] In accordance with another variation, as shown in FIG. 3, the housing 13 of the rotary drive mechanism 11 is provided on the side distal to the output member with a fork head 18 or tab. The fork head 18 has aligned bores 2 for snug-fittingly receiving a support member 16 in the form of a rod. As an alternative, the housing 13 may also be formed with two aligned bores for receiving such a rod. Which configuration of the adjusting device 10 is employed is dictated by the application at hand.

[0035] Referring back to FIG. 1, the housing 13 of the rotary drive mechanism 11 is secured to one of the side panels 20 of the slatted frame 1 by a mounting 26, so that the side panel 20 represents the stationary support structure for the adjusting device 10.

[0036] When the dc motor of the rotary drive mechanism 11 is activated, the slanted lifting arm 15 is moved into a horizontal disposition to thereby move the head portion 22 via the swing link 3 and bracket 4 into a slanted disposition, as shown in FIG. 4. Upon further swinging of the lifting arm 15 by the dc motor, the head portion 22 conjointly moves the back portion 19 until reaching an end position in which the back portion 19 also assumes a slanted disposition, as

shown in FIG. 5. Suitably, this end position is defined by a stationary stop member (not shown here), which may project out from the housing 13 or the mounting 26. Lowering of the back portion 19 and the head portion 22 is implemented through reversing the rotation direction of the dc motor.

[0037] Turning now to FIG. 6, there is shown a schematic side view of another embodiment of an adjusting device 10 according to the present invention, mounted to an exemplified slatted frame 1. Parts corresponding with those in FIG. 1 are denoted by identical reference numerals and not explained again. In this embodiment, the slatted frame 1 is devoid of a head portion so that the lifting mechanism 11 can have a simplified configuration. The swingable lifting arms 15 extend underneath in direct contact with the side panels 20 of the swingable back portion 19. Friction between the lifting arms 15 and the underside of the side panels 20 is reduced through the provision of sliders 24 which are made of suitable material known to the artisan and are attached to the free ends of the lifting arms 15.

[0038] When the dc motor of the rotary drive mechanism 11 is activated, the horizontal lifting arms 15 are moved upwardly to thereby move the back portion 19 from the horizontal disposition, shown in FIG. 6, into an intermediate incline position, shown in FIG. 7, as the sliders 24 move along the side panels 20. Upon further swinging of the lifting arms 15 by the dc motor, the back portion 19 moves to the end position, as shown in FIG. 8. Lowering of the back

[0040] As shown in FIG. 9, which is a top view of the adjusting device of FIG. 6, the crossbar 14 for interconnecting the lifting arms 15 is made of two parts and includes the actual crossbar 14 and a profiled piece 27. The rotary drive mechanism 11 is bolted via the mounting 26 to one side panel 20. To simplify the assembly, the profiled piece 27 is secured to the lifting arm 15, which is distal to the rotary drive mechanism 11, and points toward the rotary drive mechanism 11 for receiving the confronting end of the crossbar 14.

[0041] Turning now to FIG. 10, there is shown a schematic side view of yet another embodiment of an adjusting device according to the present invention, mounted to an exemplified chair 29 for adjustment of a footrest 28, shown in stowed end position. Parts corresponding with those in FIG. 1 are denoted by identical reference numerals and not explained again. In this embodiment, the lifting mechanism 12 is used to move the footrest 28 from the stowed end position to a fully extended shown in FIG. 12 and includes a pantograph linkage system 31 for implementing articulated movement of the footrest 28 between the stowed and extended positions. In general, the linkage system 31 is connected between the footrest 28 and the stationary frame of the chair 29 and includes a plurality of links interconnected in a manner generally known to the artisan and not described herein in more detail.

[0042] Persons skilled in the art will understand that the pantographic linkage system 31 is duplicated on the opposite side of the chair 29. For

[0043] FIG. 10 shows the footrest 28 in the stowed position. When activating the rotary drive mechanism 11, the lifting arms 15 rotate in clockwise direction to move the linkage system 31 out and thereby move the footrest 28 via an intermediate position, shown in FIG. 11 to the fully extended position shown in FIG. 1. Return of the footrest 28 into the stowed position is implemented through reversal of the rotary drive mechanism 11, whereby a spring 30 assists the return movement of the footrest 28, with the spring 30 extending between a link of the linkage system 31 and the lifting arms 15.

[0044] While the invention has been illustrated and described as embodied in an adjusting device, it is not intended to be limited to the details shown since various modifications and structural changes may be made without departing in any way from the spirit of the present invention.

